

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 PC-01 /103 W

-----034314 200151Z /62

R 181135Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5509

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

USINT HAVANA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0732

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, LY, ET

SUBJECT: LIBYAN-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

1. DURING MEETING ON ANOTHER SUBJECT AMERICAS DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR JERBE SPOKE OF PROBLEMS IN ETHIOPIAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT INITIALLY LIBYA HAD BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO THE SOMALI GUERRILLA ACTION IN THE OGADEN BUT WHEN THEY WERE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE REGULAR SOMALI TROOPS, LIBYA WAS FORCED TO CURTAIL ITS SUPPORT FOR SIAD BARRE. IT HAD BEEN LIBYA'S HOPE, HE SAID, THAT THE OGADEN OPERATION WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO WEAKEN MENGISTU BUT NOT SUCCESSFUL ENOUGH TO PROVOKE HIM INTO ACCEPTING MASSIVE OUTSIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

2. LIBYA, HE SAID, WAS NOW DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE OF THE ERITREAN SITUATION. ALONG WITH ALL ARAB STATES LIBYA HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH AND GIVEN VARYING
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AMOUNTS OF SUPPORT TO THE ERITREANS. IT HAD ALSO URGED THE GOVERNMENT IN ADDIS TO SEEK SOME SUPPORT OF POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION TO ERITREAN DESIRES FOR AUTONOMY. HE SAID THE POSSIBILITY OF LARGE SCALE MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ERITREANS WITH CUBAN AND RUSSIAN SUPPORT WOULD BE PAINFUL THING FOR LIBYA AND OTHERS TO WITNESS. THEREFORE, LIBYA WAS SEEKING TO DISCOURAGE BOTH THE SOVIETS AND THE

CUBANS FROM PARTICIPATING IN SUCH OPERATIONS AND AT THE SAME TIME BRING MORE PRESSURE ON THE MENGISTU GOVERNMENT TO REACH A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WITH THE ERITREANS.

3. THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW CONVERSATIONS I HAVE HAD WITH A FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL ON THIS SITUATION. IT IS NOT CERTAIN TO WHAT EXTENT JERBE IS REFLECTING OFFICIAL POLICY OR HIS OWN PREDILECTIONS. IT DOES SEEM LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT LIBYA IS INDEED CONCERNED OVER PROSPECT OF AN ERITREAN MASSACRE AND THAT QADHAFI, IN KEEPING WITH HIS CURRENT MODE AS A PEACEMAKER, IS SEEKING (APPARENTLY WITHOUT SUCCESS) INFLUENCE EVENTS IN REGION.
CARLE

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